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ABSTRACT

The project attempted to learn whether group counseling could be used effectively to move into employment, or into training for employment, hard core clients of a state vocational rehabilitation agency who, though apparently ready for employment consistently failed to obtain or retain satisfactory employment. A sample of 99 clients were involved in small group meetings aimed at helping them overcome obstacles which had prevented them from becoming employed. Early sessions were totally without structure. It was later found that better results were obtained when the therapists structured and directed the group discussions. The report includes a discussion of instruments which were devised to show what happens to certain attitudes of individuals who participated in group counseling sessions, and to observe and analyze the content and interaction of the groups as they developed. Results indicate that 69 out of 99 obtained employment, or were active in training programs, at or soon after the end of the group sessions. (Author/TL)

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RESEARCH BRIEF

GROUP COUNSELING AS AN AID IN THE EMPLOYMENT OF HARD-TO-PLACE REHABILITATION CLIENTS

Background

The purpose of this project was to demonstrate an effective method of rendering more employable certain disabled persons, clients of the Maryland Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, whose failure to obtain or hold satisfactory employment seemed to be due in part to factors other than their disabling conditions. Two results were anticipated from this project: (1) That as a result of the project an increased number of these handicapped persons would achieve suitable and stable employment, and (2) that certain attitudes and behavioral patterns which are obstacles to vocational and social adjustment might be modified by means of unstructured employment-oriented group counseling.

Implications for Action

All who are familiar with the vocational rehabilitation program are aware that the mere provision of the customary services provided by vocational rehabilitation agencies does not necessarily result in satisfactory job placement in every case. It is generally agreed that personal attitudes, behavior patterns and motivation are often the factors responsible for the future of the client to make satisfactory adjustment. There are on the rolls of every agency numbers of clients who are technically ready for employment but remain unemployed because they do not readily adjust to normal employment procedures and situations.

The Study

Consideration of this problem led a counselor on the staff of the Maryland Division of Vocational Rehabilitation to suggest group counseling as an instrument to assist in overcoming the factors that might militate against the achievement of vocational adjustment on the part of many of these clients.

A short pilot demonstration was arranged, in which eleven clients from the case rolls of the initiating counselor, all of whom remained unemployed after all of the usual rehabilitation services had been provided, were brought together for a series of ten weekly group sessions under the leadership of the counselor and an interested clinical psychologist. At the end of the experiment, in which ten of the eleven clients remained active throughout, eight clients had obtained employment, one who entered into a course of vocational training, and only one remained unmoved from his original condition.

Following the pilot study, a project grant was requested from the then Vocational Rehabilitation Administration. The request was granted, resulting in Project No. RD-1070-P, A Project to Demonstrate the Effectiveness of Unstructured Group Counseling in Developing in Disabled Persons Insight and Positive Attitudes. The purpose of the project was to show that through weekly unstructured group counseling sessions groups of vocational rehabilitation

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clients who had for a long period of time, in spite of having received the complete range of indicated rehabilitation services, remained unemployed, would, through contact with peers and co-therapists, gain insight into the characteristics and attitudes which stood in the way of their successful employment, and would consciously or unconsciously modify those attitudes.

The project extended over a period of three years, during which ten groups were organized and met weekly for varying periods of time, generally from eighteen to twenty-four weeks. There were three groups during the first year, four in the second, and three in the third. Three counselors participated in only one group each; two counselors led groups in two of the three years; and one counselor worked with three groups. The same clinical psychologist served as co-counselor with nine of the ten groups. Because the client population from which the group members were selected was in general unstable and under-motivated, and because attendance at meetings was entirely voluntary, there was in some instances considerable difficulty in maintaining groups of tolerable size. In two or three groups it was necessary to admit new members after several meetings had been held. In all, however, 99 clients attended a sufficient number of meetings to be considered full participants.

It was felt desirable to measure objectively changes in subjects' attitudes relevant to employment in the course of group counseling, and to document objectively developmentive group processes. A review of the literature failed to reveal appropriate measures. It was necessary therefore to develop and adopt two separate kinds of measures for purposes of this study. These are described below.

1. Measures of Changes in Attitudes Relevant to Employment

Three separate measures were employed. The first was an experimental scale of the MMPI, developed by Tydlaska* which has been demonstrated to distinguish between subjects with "poor work attitudes" and those with "satisfactory work attitudes". The second and third measures, developed specifically for the study, were scales of attitudes about employment of the handicapped. One scale measured the handicapped subject's own attitudes about employment of the handicapped in general, and the other scale measured his expectations about employer's attitudes toward the handicapped as workers. The three measures were applied before and following a period of group participation.

2. Measures of Group Process

Two systems of coding group processes were developed and rejected as unreliable. The third system which was developed showed satisfactory inter-judge reliability when applied to tape recorded group sessions. The system involved separate judgments of content and interactional process, and was applicable regardless of the stage of group development, group

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* Tydlaska & Mengel. A Scale for Measuring Work Attitudes for the MMPI, J. appl. Psychol., 1953, 37, 474-478.

size, and group composition. It helped to distinguish different kinds of group interactions, and also indicated changes in group development. It was applied to the first five recorded group sessions, and then to occasional sessions throughout the life of the groups.

Findings

Numerous minor conclusions can be drawn from the results of this demonstration, but there seem to be inescapable conclusions:

1. Group counseling can be an effective technique in directing marginal, questionably motivated rehabilitation clients into active seeking after and entering into employment.

2. The unstructured, non-directive approach on the part of the co-counselors is less effective than a more positive approach.

3. No rehabilitation counselor should be encouraged to attempt this type of counseling without at least minimal training in the technique.

FINAL REPORT

A PROJECT TO DEMONSTRATE THE EFFECTIVENESS OF UNSTRUCTURED GROUP COUNSELING IN DEVELOPING IN DISABLED PERSONS INSIGHTS AND POSITIVE ATTITUDES

MARYLAND DIVISION OF VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION

Project No. RD-1070-P

November 3, 1970

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A PROJECT TO DEMONSTRATE THE EFFECTIVENESS OF UNSTRUCTURED GROUP COUNSELING IN DEVELOPING IN DISABLED PERSONS INSIGHTS AND POSITIVE ATTITUDES

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A PROJECT TO DEMONSTRATE THE EFFECTIVENESS OF UNSTRUCTURED GROUP COUNSELING IN DEVELOPING IN DISABLED PERSONS INSIGHTS AND POSITIVE ATTITUDES

AN ABSTRACT

This project represented an attempt to learn whether or not a process of group counseling could be used effectively to move into employment, or into training for employment, clients of a state vocational rehabilitation agency who, though apparently ready for employment, consistently failed to obtain or retain satisfactory employment.

Over a three year period, 99 clients of the Maryland Division of Vocational Rehabilitation were engaged in a series of group meetings to determine whether through group interaction they could overcome some of the obstacles which had prevented them from becoming employed. There were ten groups in all, which met at weekly intervals for varying periods of time, the shortest being ten weeks (this was a pilot group), and the others lasting from 18 to 24 weeks. Each group was led by a pair of co-therapists, or co-counselors, one a clinical psychologist and the other a rehabilitation counselor. In the conduct of the earlier groups, an attempt was made to allow the group discussions to be completely unstructured. This proved to be unsatisfactory, however, as the conversations began to deteriorate into rehersals of personal misfortunes and grievances; and much better results were obtained in later sessions after the co-counselors began to actively but unobtrusively structure and direct the discussions.

In spite of the fact that all of the clients participating were considered by their counselors to be "hard core" with little prospect of becoming employed, 69 out of the 99 had obtained employment, or were active in training programs, at or soon after the end of their group sessions.

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FOREWORD

The idea for this project was conceived by a counselor on the staff of the Maryland Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, to whom, when the project was approved, was given the responsibility of conducting the study. However, the then head of the agency stipulated that the name of a central headquarters staff member appear as Project Director, with the originating counselor in actual charge of the program. The counselor left the agency within a short time, and no principal investigator was employed. However, the counselors involved, and also the two psychologists who were serving as consultants, were enthusiastic regarding the project and volunteered to carry on, which they did with a minimum of supervision. One of the psychologists, Dr. Winfield Scott, assumed a limited leadership role, and it was to a large extent due to his assistance that the project was completed. Immediately after the conclusion of the counseling sessions, Dr. Scott left the State. His notes, with those of the counselors and the second psychologist, were left with the agency, and from those an attempt has been made to assemble this report, which is admittedly most inadequate.

CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

Background Information

This project, designed to assess the effectiveness of group counseling procedures, was originated by a counselor with the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation of the State of Maryland, working out of the Baltimore Office. The problem as it was originally envisioned was that of determing whether or not unstructured group meetings might help disabled individuals to achieve successful employment. The counselor was of the opinion that group therapy techniques could be utilized in certain hard core cases to achieve employment or to motivate the individual to engage in a practical program of training. Other members of the staff of the Division also became interested in evaluating this method; that is, the group approach to counseling, in order to see whether or not those individuals who did not respond to the traditional one-to-one counseling relationship would be more responsive to the group experience.

The Problem

Those who are familiar with the Vocational Rehabilitation Program are aware that the mere provision of customary services provided by the vocational rehabilitation agency does not necessarily result in satisfactory job placement. It is generally agreed that personal attitudes, behavioral patterns, and motivation are often factors that determine whether or not the client will be successful after completion of the full rehabilitative program. There are on the rolls of every agency a certain number of clients who are technically ready for employment, but who remain unemployed because they have difficulty in adjusting to the normal employment procedures and the social situations of the job.

The Pilot Study

In order to explore some of the ideas presented above, a pilot group was formed consisting of ten clients and two leaders who worked as co-therapists. The group members had the following characteristics in common: (1) the clients were all active cases with the Maryland Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, and were selected from the caseload of the counselor who was participating as co-therapist; (2) the rehabilitative process was considered to be completed to the point where each of these individuals was theoretically ready for work; (3) every member of the group had prior work experience; (4) each member showed no history of recent work experience; (5) it was presumed that each person was interested in actively seeking employment.

This pilot group met in eleven regular evening sessions, which were held in surroundings not identified with the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation. The group sessions were conducted by a psychologist and a rehabilitation counselor who assumed the roles of co-counselors. The vocational rehabilitation counselor had several years of successful experience in vocational rehabilitation, and was currently working in this field. The psychologist was one with a substantial background in group psychotherapy and group counseling, as well as a knowledge of the vocational rehabilitation process.

In the selection of subjects, an effort was made to assemble a group that would be heterogeneous with respect to age, education, disability, experience, race, and source of income. Nineteen clients were selected. To each was sent a letter explaining the purpose of the project and requesting his participation. A self-addressed, stamped card was enclosed on which the client could indicate by a check mark whether or not he was interested. If no answer was received within an indicated period, the client received a second letter. Of the nineteen individuals who were contacted, thirteen responded and indicated their desire to take part in the program. Of the original thirteen, eleven came often enough so that they could be considered members of the group. Although the group was originally planned to include both men and women this was not possible, since the number of women responding favorably was too small to assure a comfortable minority.

Partly because the project was started rather late in the year, it was decided to conduct ten sessions, although the psychologist felt that a greater number of meetings would be desirable. A meeting place was found outside the quarters of the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, so that the clients might have less of a feeling that these were ordinary visits to their counselor.

Maximum group participation and group cohesion were achieved at a very early stage of this project. This was indicated by the fact that after the first meeting, the group members referred to themselves as "we," the group, rather than "I," and no fixed communication patterns were involved in that members would talk to each other as well as talk to the group, and at times would talk to the leader. Throughout the early meetings, there were not the usual silences that one expects. In terms of content, the group members talked first about their own disabilities; this they were encouraged to do by the leaders during the first meeting. Other than that, the leaders offered little structure as to the nature of the communication. Next they began talking about their feelings, their hostility towards society as a whole, which was symbolized by insurance companies, employers, physicians, etc. At no time during the ten sessions did the members make hostile remarks concerning the Vocational Rehabilitation Agency, although the therapists felt that some hostility did exist. After the ventilation of hostilities, proportionately more time was invested in dealing with positive activities such as job-seeking procedures. Members would offer each other suggestions regarding possible opportunities, or would tell about jobs which they themselves were unable to accept because of their disabilities.

The communication patterns were not unique in that in the early meetings it was obvious that three or four members were emerging as power members of the group. At first they talked directly to each other and indirectly to the rest of the group. At no time did this reach a point that threatened the existence of the group. The early emergence of these power members undoubtedly helped break down any resistence the members may have had toward frank expression of feelings. As the group matured, members gained verbal support from each other, and at times would discuss their personal problems, although this occurred infrequently. During the later sessions various friendships developed. On several occasions, discussions were continued informally by some members after the group had adjourned. Individual personal problems which would make for poor relationships with employers were sometimes discussed with considerable frankness and with some anxiety. Comments and criticisms were not always accepted gracefully, but again this did not disrupt group activities.

The investigators were encouraged by their findings in the pilot study; however, they were fully aware of its limitation; that is, they were dealing with one group for a relatively short period. It was not possible in the time available to explore all of the facets of this technique and to deal with the salient questions which needed to be answered if this were to become a procedure that would be useful in an agency. Since all of the clients came from the rolls of one of the group leaders, it was felt that it was imperative to have a group in which none of the members were known to any of the leaders. If this study were to measure the effectiveness of group counseling of chronically unemployed handicapped individuals, there should be some method to measure the effect of the group activity and the various roles of leadership, for it was expected that the variable personality characteristics in the clients as well as differences in training would affect the atmosphere of the group and its movement towards its goal. It was essential that this project be expanded in order to really study the effectiveness of the group approach and determine whether or not it could be utilized in the program of the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation. In the pilot study, it was felt that the method met the needs of many of the clients in that group; the size of the group was too small, however, to give an indication as to whether or not a significant number of the total client population of the agency would benefit from participating in the group experience. There was concern as to whether or not all counselors might be able to integrate group counseling into their regular programs. Did it require a special technique with which not all counselors could be comfortable? Was the process to time consuming to be worthy of general application? Did the results in terms of clients entering employment justify the time and cost? The leaders felt that there were things that they were doing and that there were things that each of the group members were doing which tended to promote positive attitudes and would eventually result in instilling in the client increased motivation to seek employment and a better understanding of the reasons for his failure to function effectively. Also there were things that were happening in the group which might have an undesirable effect on the individual. It was thought that these factors should be isolated whenever possible in order to effect a more meaningful group experience. Since this study involved exploration of techniques and the validity of the technique, and evaluation of the application to the agency, it was requested that this project be expanded to three groups which would be able to meet over a longer period of time. The request was granted, and the format for the project was essentially the same as that of the original study; however, in the full scale project it was intended to meet for approximately thirty sessions rather than the ten sessions in the initial effort, and the several groups were to be similar with respect to leadership; in that each had a vocational counselor and a psychologist, as co-leaders, but different with respect to selection of members. A detailed description of the procedure followed is given in Chapter II.

The Setting for the Project

The Maryland Division of Vocational Rehabilitation is one of eight divisions in the State Department of Education. An Assistant Superintendent of Schools for Vocational Rehabilitation is in charge of the Division, which is the only operating division of the Department. That is, all of the other advisors serve in an advisory and consultative capacity to the school systems throughout the State, whereas the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, through direct and local offices, provides direct services to handicapped persons.

The function of the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation is to provide whatever services may be necessary to render persons who are vocationally handicapped because of a physical or mental disability fit to engage in gainful employment. The services offered in attaining this objective are complete physical, mental, social, and vocational evaluation, guidance and counseling, physical restoration, training, placement and follow-up on the job. Auxillary services such as maintenance, transportation, and occupational tools and equipment are also provided when they are necessary in achieving the vocational objective of the handicapped person, and there is no other available resource for obtaining these services. The actual counseling, guidance and provision of other services to the handicapped is done by Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors who work out of district and local offices throughout the State. There are also several Vocational Rehabilitation Units operated by the Division in various hospitals and institutions throughout the State.

While it may appear to the casual observer and sometimes to the rehabilitation counselor himself that the work of a rehabilitation counselor consists chiefly in arranging for and purchasing physical restoration, training and other services, the real function of the counselor is considered to be counseling. This counseling is carried out on a person to person basis and the introduction of counseling on a group basis in connection with the Project was an innovation. Among the things learned in the course of the Project was the fact that there is considerable difference between group counseling and individual counseling and that while many counselors can become adept at both, not every competent individual counselor can perform equally competently in a group situation. It is suspected that the converse of this is also true.

In the early days of vocational rehabilitation, only persons who were physically disabled were served, but since 1943 those mentally handicapped have been served also. During the years immediately before and during the conduct of this Project the percentage of the mentally disturbed and mentally retarded among the clientelle increased appreciably. For this reason a certain number of the mentally handicapped were included in the group, although only the physically handicapped had been contemplated when plans for the Project were originally drawn up.

This agency endeavors to make services available to the greatest number of clients without sacrificing the quality of the service rendered or limiting its scope. It was with this objective in mind that this project was designed. It was believed that the agency could achieve the above goals in a more economical manner without lowering present standards by having the counselor see the clients in a group.

It was the opinion of the investigators that the group meetings would enhance the counseling process. The clients would by their attendance in such meetings be influenced to interact with other people with similar problems. It was believed that such group activity would serve to motivate and support the clients.

Since this was a demonstration project designed to investigate the effectiveness of group counseling in a vocational rehabilitation setting, the investigators decided to use clients and counselors who showed interest in the project from regional and local offices which were located in close proximity of the Central Office. During the second year a special group was formed in the

extreme western section of the State. This group will receive further discussion in another section of this paper.

The following local and regional offices participated in this project:

The Baltimore Metropolitan Office

7 groups	3 counselors	3 years

The Annapolis Local Office

1 group	1 counselor	1 year

The Hyattsville District Office

1 group	1 counselor	1 year

Review of Relevant Literature

A review of the literature has failed to reveal any studies directly related to the group counseling process for people with physical disabilities, or group counseling which was primarily designed to move people towards or into gainful employment.

Generally, any type of counseling has as its goal the altering of attitude, emotion, or some psychological phenomenon. In this project, the interest lay in the changes in the mode of operation and patterns of behavior as they relate to job seeking activity as well as the feelings, attitudes, etc., of the group members. The forces to be dealt with in this present paper are those psychological forces which would either directly or indirectly result in moving the client toward employment.

The use of groups to promote social learning is not entirely new in concept, for Joshua Bierer[1] advocates the use of small social groups to promote social learning in the 1930's. In 1962, he demonstrated the effectiveness of this method in a treatment situation. He placed thirty-four patients in an eight room house and by giving them specific assignments, 24 or the 34 improved. He felt that this situational treatment of "Mutual Inter-Relation Treatment" shows promise and therefore there should be more investigation.

(1) Bierer, Joshua. The Therapeutic Community Hostel, "The International Jol. of Social Psychiatry", 11:2, 1961.

CHAPTER II
METHODOLGY

Staff

Six counselors were selected to participate in this project. They served as co-leaders along with a clinical psychologist. Their duties within the agency were similar in terms of responsibilities and caseloads; however, there was a broad variation in experience in vocational counseling in that one counselor had been with the agency for little more than one year, while the senior member in terms of time had more than ten years of experience. When it came to experience in handling groups the counselors were more homogeneous in that only two of the participants had any prior experience. These two had been exposed to group work for one year prior to coming to the project. The psychologist had taught group therapy and supervised group activities for a number of years.

Since the meetings were held in the evenings, the participation of the counselors was carried out in addition to their regular workload. During the three years in which the programs were in progress, there were nine different groups formed. One counselor worked as co-leader during the first year, during the second year he withdrew, and again formed a group during the third year. Another counselor who joined the project during its second year formed another group during the third year. Two of the counselors worked in the project for one year, one left the agency, and the other, the one female counselor, stayed with the program from its inception to its ending.

Population

Initially it had been decided to include only those clients who were classified as "Status 6." These were the individuals who had received all of the vocational services which were indicated but for some reason were unable to obtain gainful employment. The early groups consisted of people whose disabilities ranged from those with multiple incapacitating physical disabilities to those with relatively mild physical handicaps. During the first year those with primary emotional or mental disorders were excluded. It became evident during the early stages of the project, however, that it was not possible to separate the physical from the psychological difficulties. The two were so interrelated that it was found necessary to change the standards for selection of members. During the ensuing years clients whose primary disability was psychological in nature were also included. The leaders felt comfortable with dealing with psychological problems since in each group the leadership team consisted of a vocational counselor and a certified clinical psychologist.

The composition of the groups was determined by the counselor. Some of them worked with clients from their own caseload while others preferred to have their colleagues in the agency refer clients to them. Although each group had a psychologist who was working as co-counselor, the formation of the groups and their composition remained the responsibility of the counselor. In this situation it was felt that groups of eight to ten clients were the most effective. However, some success was achieved with groups with as few as six members.

The disabilities of the group members included a broad variety of conditions. A typical group might be composed of clients with cardiac problems,

an epileptic, a hemiplegic, one with defective vision, etc. It was found that the nature of the physical disability or the severity of the disability did not affect the client's ability to take part in group counseling, nor did it preclude his becoming a member of the group.

The group members ranged in age from 16 to 55, the median being in their 40's. Their education ranged from 0 years to 4 years of college. Both men and women took part in the project without regard to race. There was no attempt to categorize these clients in any manner.

As stated above, the counselor selected his own group. First, he contacted each prospective client by mail, giving him a brief description of the activity and at the same time inviting him to join. (See specimen letter in the Appendix.)

Setting

The meetings were held in a pleasant physical atmosphere. The rooms were well lighted and they were neither too large, which might make the group have a feeling of being "lost", nor were they so small as to cause the members to feel cramped. Each of the meeting rooms had a coffee urn which enabled the participants to provide coffee, which may have been important in helping the group overcome its initial anxiety. This was especially true of the early groups.

At the first meeting the group assembled in the meeting room with someone there to greet them, i.e., one of the leaders. The leaders engaged themselves in making coffee or tea prior to the meeting so that the group members might become oriented to each other. At the designated time for the meeting to begin, the group leaders introduced themselves, and stated the reason for the meeting.

Method of Operation

It had been learned through experience with the pilot group which was conducted for ten sessions that there were apparently many areas, procedures, and techniques which required further investigation before one could make group counseling an integral part of an agency's operation. It was felt that group counseling had pragmatic offerings. However, it was desirable to test various techniques and investigate specific problems under varied conditions. It was not always possible to set up specific research designs to evaluate behavioral bits for interaction. Therefore, heavy reliance upon the empirical observations of the group leaders was necessary. Impartial psychologists reviewed observations through study of the recording tapes, but they did not participate in group meetings. The problem of determining roles of the leaders was encountered in the beginning. After some considerations, it was decided to follow the format that was utilized in the pilot study; that is, the counselor would generally address himself to content dealing with work, training, and agency matters, while the psychologist would be concerned with group interaction, individual personal motivation, or any other verbalization and behavior which was thought to be essentially psychological in nature. It became apparent very early in the sessions that this type of dichotomy was not functional, for by working together the co-leaders were able to learn something about each other's areas and manner of operation and soon, or rather during the latter part of the first year, the psychologist

would find himself discussing matters which were first thought to be matters for the counselor and vice versa. Much of this came about as a result of brief conferences between the counselors after each meeting, in which the activities of the previous session were reviewed. The meetings lasted anywhere from one-half to one and one-half hours. At the beginning they were much longer, but during the latter part of the first year the need for lengthy meetings decreased. In the beginning, these conferences served as learning situations for both the counselor and the psychologist. Also, they enabled the leadership to make pertinent observations and study the locomotion or movement of the group. Such factors as group anxiety, group hostility, and individual significant behavior were all topics for discussion. During the first year it was not possible to construct a plan of action, for it was not known how this procedure would be accepted on a more general basis, nor was there awareness of what unique problems might confront the group. During this year the procedure was varied somewhat in terms of group construction, for (as stated earlier) some of the groups were composed of members who had different counselors within the agency, some were composed of clients from the roll of the counselor who was involved with the group, and there was one group where half of the members came from the caseload of the counselor and the other half came from caseloads of her colleagues. Whenever problems presented themselves, the first effort was to work them out within the group. In short, individual problems were made group problems. Often we were able to work them through this way. When situations occurred that could not be handled within the group, and these were situations that involved the agency, the client was encouraged to take this up on an individual basis with his counselor. The co-therapists, as group members, refrained from taking the client's problems to the counselor. Only in an emergency situation was it felt that they should intervene or work as a liaison between the client and counselor. During the first year this took place only once, when it was observed that a client was becoming upset to the point where he was in need of professional treatment for his problems. In the one case, when it was felt necessary to contact the counselor, this was done with the consent of the group — at least a tacit consent of the group. After seeing the client, the counselor was in agreement with the group decision, and assisted in obtaining psychiatric help. The psychiatrist felt that the severity of the illness reauired hospitalization and the client was, therefore, admitted to a hospital for a sixty-day period. The patient returned after his period of hospitalization much improved and took a very active part in the group; in fact he became somewhat of an authority on group therapy since he had participated in therapeutic groups during his hospitalization. This client stayed with the group until it ended, and before the group sessions were closed, had become gainfully employed back at his original vocation.

The most significant experience that was gained from the previous year was that the groups should be more structured, and that non-direct, unstructured techniques were not as effective in this situation as a more structured and direct approach. In the light of this knowledge, the leaders set up a more formal situation. They introduced themselves individually to the group members as they came in, and they had the group individually introduce themselves in a somewhat more stilted manner.

It was during the second year that there were discovered several manipulations and activities that could be either initiated or carried out by the leaders which would help the group to accomplish its goal. Keeping in mind that the primary purpose for each meeting was to carry out some activity,

overt or covert, which would lead to the individual member's becoming gainfully employed, it was observed that encouraging the various members to exchange information on job opportunities not only helped to motivate other members to seek certain jobs or the job in question, but also gave those members who were not eligible for the job because of their physical handicap a feeling of belonging. It was learned also at this time that it was important for members not only to gain a real feeling of cohesion and realize that there were other people in the same situation that they were in, but also to learn that there were other people who were interested in their situation. It was during this time that the leaders introduced other auxiliary techniques, or more accurately, improved upon some of the earlier techniques of introducing auxiliary resources, individuals, and materials. An example of this was the increased discussion of the role of the newspaper, the use of want ads, and the pros and cons of telephone contacts. In several of the groups, the counselor would bring in various forms for applications for employment, and there was a short workshop on the filling out of applications. The client would take his application home and the following session would be devoted to discussing problems that were related to filling out applications. One of the groups brought up the problem of the high cost of job seeking activities, more specifically, how the lack of funds kept them from making an attempt to seek jobs or limited them in this area. The main problem was the lack of finances for transportation. This was especially true in the metropolitan area and was one of the situations which was brought to the attention of the agency by the counselor. The administration saw fit to work out a procedure by which those who legitimately needed funds to carry out efforts to seek employment opportunities were given money or were reimbursed. This, as a practical matter, proved fruitful for those who were unable to seek jobs before and in the group situation showed little motivation toward doing so, became more interested and in several cases were successful in finding gainful employment.

It could not be determined at this time that there was any activity or one type of group composition which was superior to the other, although it was apparent that the group must be more structured, and at the same time be permitted to develop naturally to the point where the members would be comfortable with each other. Matured groups were able to express negative, hostile feelings as well as positive feelings. Often negative comments are more constructive to the individual when they come from the group than positive "Pollyannaish" comments. Unless the group has been meeting long enough that there is some cohesion, and the members comfortable with each other, the negative comments should come primarily from other group members rather than from the leader. However, in the third year, one of the groups developed to the point where they felt comfortable in accepting strong criticism and suggestions from the counselor. This only occurred, however, when the group had reached a point of maturity whereby the members could talk frankly and honestly criticize each other. It was at this point they were able to accept negative remarks from the group leaders without feeling that they were being unjustly attacked.

The third year of the project was spent in refining the techniques and procedures that had been utilized during the first two years. Previous experience had shown that the early sessions would be non-productive in terms of attaining goals, that much of the time would be spent in giving the group information and letting members ventilate their hostile feelings. However, it

was also clear that there was a point, which usually occurred after the tenth or twelfth session, at which time the members would begin to function as a group, and at this time the leaders could assume a more direct approach. It had also become evident that if the group did not "jell" after the first ten or twelve sessions, the outlook for the group was unfavorable. During the third year, the leaders felt more comfortable with this technique. They were able to evaluate the negative effects of their own participation as well as the positive ones.

Research Procedure

The central purpose of the project was to explore the use of group counseling with chronically unemployed, handicapped clients of the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation. Clients included in this study were for the most part "hard core" unemployed cases who, following the usual vocational rehabilitation procedures, remained unemployed or were unable to stay employed. They were clients whose failure to obtain or hold employment seemed to be due to factors other than their disabling conditions, and it was anticipated that they might be mobilized to seek or educated to hold employment as a result of meeting in groups. A total of ten groups were studied over the course of three years, each of which was conducted by a Vocational Rehabilitation counselor and consulting psychologist acting as co-counselors. Meetings were held weekly over a period of at least six months, except for one group which had a total of only ten meetings.

The initial plan in organizing the study was to engage the hard-core of unemployed vocational rehabilitation clients in group counseling, with the hope and expectation that they would be remobilized to seek and maintain employment. The clients initially selected — during both the pilot project and the first year of the study — were clients who had been through usual vocational rehabilitation procedures, but who remained unemployed, or who were unable to retain employment if they were ever employed. During the second year, an attempt was made for research purposes to restrict participation to clients who had been in "Status 6" for six months or longer; i.e., who had been through rehabilitation procedures, but were nevertheless unemployed and not actively involved in training. Because there were too few such clients available, and because of the high dropout rate from groups, it was necessary to relax standards markedly, to include not only clients who had been in "Status 6" for much shorter periods of time, but also clients who had not completed the rehabilitation process. This was the case also with the final year of the project. Selection of clients was made by the counselors, for the most part from their own case loads, but in one case from the case loads of other counselors. While not all clients were "Status 6" clients, the tendency was clearly to choose "problem cases" for participation in the groups. Clients with primarily psychiatric disabilities were excluded; but those participating included many with poor employment histories, generally little education, many who exerted little effort on their own parts to find employment, many who were unable to hold employment. They were considered by their counselors to have poor prognoses for rehabilitation by usual procedures.

A total of 120 clients participated during the three years of the study, of whom 99 attended five or more sessions, and by this standard are considered to have been active participants in group counseling. During the first two years, data on educational history and employment status were obtained from clients own reports, which were written out on test forms. Clients who were illiterate were encouraged to ask the interviewers for help in responding to written questions; but many were apparently reluctant to do so, as were

many semi-literate clients. As a result, the information from twelve of the clients from the first year and 6 from the second must be considered of doubtful validity, or for other reasons had to be discarded. Because of missed appointments with the interviewer, or late starting in the program, there is no data available on 4 of the participants in the third year of the program. There are, thus, data on 77 actively participating clients from the three years. Data on other clients, who were interviewed or tested but were not active participants in the program, are not included for consideration here.

Clients ranged in age from 16 to the late 50's; but the modal age range (including 63 of the 77 clients) was from 28 to 43. Education ranged from one year to 18 years; but college or even high school graduates were few in number (3 college graduates and 8 high school graduates). The modal education range, including 56 of the clients, was 3 to 10 years. The length of time clients had been unemployed before group counseling began was also variable, ranging from 7 years at the longest to clients who were employed when group counseling began. (These latter clients were included because, while they were employed at the time, they had unstable histories of employment.) The modal length of unemployment, including 54 of the clients, was from one-half year to 4 years.

Most of the clients on whom there is data, then, had not only physical handicaps, but other liabilities as well. They were of an educational level which would have made job-finding difficult under the best of circumstances. If the difficulty of reestablishing oneself increases with the length of time one has been unemployed, there was the additional handicap of having been out of work for relatively long periods of time. The process of selection was such that the group was different from other vocational rehabilitation clients in that they were considered difficult cases by their counselors.

Instruments Used, Data Collected and Analyses Performed

The present study is one of the effectiveness of group counseling of the chronically unemployed handicapped. The guiding principle underlying the development and application of measures in the study has been that it is a demonstration project. Measures were therefore developed and adapted essentially for purposes of documentation. An effort was made to devise instruments which would show what happens to certain attitudes of the individual as a result of participation in group counseling sessions, and to observe and convey what features characterize the groups themselves as they develop. Since composition of the several groups was varied, and techniques of group leadership were diverse, with consequences for group process, it was necessary to develop instruments which would be applicable under widely varying circumstances, and which would still convey meaningful observations about the effectiveness of group counseling procedures in vocational rehabilitation. Measures adapted, devised and applied to the individuals and groups are described separately below.

1. Measures of Change in Subjects

Counseling groups were formed for purposes of vocational rehabilitation. While it was not known at the beginning how subjects would use the groups, the test of effectiveness of group counseling procedures lay in whether or not group participation, for whatever reasons, would increase the chances that the subject would find and keep employment. It was expected that participation in group sessions would increase chances of employment, and that underlying this

would be changes in attitudes relevant to employment. With this in mind, one measure of attitudes was adapted, and two were devised, for application to participants in the study. Subjects were tested at the beginning of participation in group sessions, and again after a period of participation in the group. The measures are as follows.

(a) Work Attitude Scale

The MMPI was administered during the first and second years of the study as one of the test battery. Tydlaska and Mengel* have identified a scale of 37 items from the MMPI which distinguish subjects with "satisfactory work attitudes" from subjects with "poor work attitudes", correctly identifying 85 per cent of the former, and 88 per cent of the latter, using outside judgments as criteria. The MMPI administered to the project subjects was scored on this scale.

(b) Employer Attitudes Scale

While the work attitudes scale described above deals with attitudes relevant to employment in general, the employer attitudes scale, and the employment attitudes scale, described below, deals specifically with attitudes relevant to employment of the handicapped. The employer attitudes scale is a measure of the discrepancy between subjects' expectations of how employers regard the handicapped as workers, and how a survey has shown personnel managers and supervisors to regard them in fact. The scale is derived from a study conducted by the Industrial Relations Center of the University of Minnesota*, of the attitudes of a large national sampling of employers toward employment of the handicapped, and of their attitudes toward the handicapped as an employee. The employer attitudes scale derived from this study is a 13 item scale, in which the subject is asked to predict the attitudes of employers toward the handicapped. Subjects are required to answer on a five point scale, ranging from "strongly agree" to "strongly disagree." Examples of the items are as follows: "Most employers are bothered by the appearance of handicapped persons."

"Most employers think that handicapped persons expect everyone to pamper them."

"Most employers expect that handicapped persons are likely to get angry if you mention their handicap."

"Most employers feel that handicapped persons expect to be taken care of by others."

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*Tydlaska and Mengel. A Scale for Measuring Work Attitudes from the MMPI. The Journal of Applied Psychology, 1953, 37, 474-478.

*Schletzer, Davis, England and Lofquist. Attitudinal Barriers to Employment. The Minnesota Study of Vocational Rehabilitation, Vol. XI, June 1961.

Scoring on this test is based on the degree of accordance with or discrepancy between the actual attitudes of three-quarters of the personnel managers and supervisors surveyed. Scores range from 0 to -3, or nine of the items, and from 0 to -2 on four of the items, depending on the degree of discrepancy with managerial attitudes. The possible range of scores on the employer attitudes scale is from 0 to -35. A very low score should reflect attitudes detrimental to employment.

(c) Employment Attitudes Scale

Whereas the employer attitudes scale described above measures expectations of the subject with regard to attitudes of employers, the employment attitudes scale is devised as a measure of potentially detrimental attitudes of the subject himself toward employment of the handicapped. A 17 item, five point scale with a possible range of scores from +34 to -34, it contains items to which the subject's responses reflect constructive or defeatist attitudes about employment of the handicapped. Items deal with such things as expectations of differential or preferential treatment in jobs as a handicapped person, expectations of success of handicapped persons as employees, and estimations of the worth of handicapped employees by the subject. Sample items from the scale are as follows:

"If placed in the 'right' position, a handicapped person works just as well as a non-handicapped person."

"A supervisor ought not to expect a handicapped person to do as much work as a non-handicapped person."

"It is a firm's civic duty to hire at least a few handicapped workers."

"Handicapped workers in a firm are usually not considered equally important with others."

A high negative score would reflect attitudes potentially detrimental to acquisition of or continuation in a job by the subject.

2. Measures of Group Development

During the first year of the project, a study was made of the development of three separate groups, and a system was developed for coding tape recordings of group sessions on the basis of what happened in these groups. Each of the groups was conducted under the co-leadership of the Vocational Rehabilitation counselor and a consulting psychologist. One member of the leadership pair was constant for all groups, while the second member, the Vocational Rehabilitation counselor, varied from group to group. While an attempt was made to involve a fixed number of clients in group participation, the actual number of members varied from session to session within each group, and the average number of clients varied across groups. The number of clients participating varied from four to ten in one group, from four to eight in the second, and from three to twelve in the third. Modal attendance was eight in one group, five in the second, and six in the third. In addition to variations in group composition and attendance, there was also a variability in constancy of group membership; while some clients were with the group for its entire life, others were

added long after the group had begun meeting. In addition to the general requirements that measure document courses groups followed, then, several additional requirements were imposed by the inconsistent composition of the groups; that the measures be applicable independently of the size of the groups or group memberhips and that they be validly applicable to groups where leaders have different orientations. Additional requirements were that measures convey what was talked about and how topics were characteristically discussed, that they be accurate in conveying both consistencies among and differences between groups, and that they be applicable to tape recordings of the sessions.

The problem of documentation of group development reduced itself to two different problems: how to record the substance of discussions, and how to record the patterns of interaction within the group. Two separate codes were thus developed, the "structure code", and the "content code". Using these two codes simultaneously, it was possible to make judgements about the pattern of interaction on the "structure" dimension, and about the substance of interaction on the "content" dimension. The coding systems developed are as follows.

Structure

Unit judged: one speech, exluding introjections.

1. Leader introduces topic.
2. Client introduces topic.
3. Client responds to leader with
   - (a) Agreement
   - (b) Disagreement
   - (c) Generalization
   - (d) Specification
   - (e) Question
   - (f) Clarification of question or statement
   - (g) Information
   - (h) Irrelevance
4. Client responds to client with
   - (a) Agreement
   - (b) Disagreement
   - (c) Generalization
   - (d) Specification
   - (e) Question
   - (f) Clarification of question or statement
   - (g) Information
   - (h) Irrelevance
5. Leader responds to client with
   - (a) Agreement
   - (b) Disagreement
   - (c) Generalization
   - (d) Specification
   - (e) Question
   - (f) Clarification of question or statement
   - (g) Information
   - (h) Irrelevance
6. Leader responds to leader with
   - (a) Agreement

(b) Disagreement
(c) Generalization
(d) Specification
(e) Question
(f) Clarification of question or statement
(g) Information
(h) Irrelevance

7. "Pandemonium" — confused or garbled discussion

The structure code was developed to classify the pattern of responses of group participants, both clients and leaders, independent of subject matter discussed. It was so devised that each statement (exclusive of introjections) made in the course of recorded session could be classified as to the person to whom the speaker was responding, and as to the general nature of his response. An attempt was made to develop a comprehensive set of categories, reliably applicable to recordings, and so constructed that differences in patterns of response would reflect characteristics of importance in group development. Thus within the code are seven classes of responses among participants, and within four of the classes are eight sub-classes of responses which state what kind of response the subject makes. The system provides for classification of every response in terms of the person to whom the group member is responding. Judgments about responses are easy to make in this respect; most often the judgment can be based on recognition of whether the preceding speaker was a client or a leader, although it is often necessary to recognize whom the speaker is addressing.

With classes 3, 4, 5 and 6 of responses, judgments are made as to which of eight different kinds of sub-classes of responses the speaker makes. The eight sub-classes are the same in each of the four categories, and require greater exposition than the classes themselves. They are as follow: (a) agreement - subject responds with a word or statement conveying agreement with or support of a statement by the previous speaker; (b) disagreement - subject responds with a word or statement conveying disagreement with the previous speaker; (c) generalization - subject responds to a previous speaker or speakers with a statement which elevates the discussion to a level of general interest ("I think that's true of all of us"), or which involves a statement or principle based on previous statements ("You tell employers you have a handicap, right away they talk about their insurance rates are higher if they hire you"). The generalization may be in the form of a question ("What experiences have the rest of us had looking for jobs this week?") (d) Specification - the subject responds to the previous speaker or speakers with a statement which brings the discussion to a level of personal interest from a generalized level, or which conveys an application of a general principle to the speaker's case; (e) question - speaker asks a previous speaker for information or clarification of the point; (f) clarification of question or statement - speaker elaborates on a prior question or statement of his own; (g) information - subject makes a statement which conveys information, gives advice to another member, states an opinion about a subject, or involves clarification of a statement or question of a previous speaker; (h) irrelevance - subject responds with a statement which neither relates to a previous statement nor introduces a new topic.

In the application of the code system, several sub-classes of responses were used very frequently, and others rarely or not at all. "Information" responses were very frequently used, while "irrelevance" responses were so infrequently applied as rarely to appear in the data.

Content Code

Whereas the unit under judgment in the case of the structure code was the individual speech, the unit judged for content was the natural unit of time as it developed in the session. Length of discussion of each content unit was timed, and judgments were made about the essential content of each unit. The total number of units judged was generally small for each session; rarely were there more than 12 content units for each session. Units were classified in the following term:

Content

Unit judged: Natural unit, by time.

1. Structuring (The content of discussion relates essentially to purposes of the group, through statements of purpose or direction of discussion.)
2. Request for, presentation of, or discussion of information.
   (a) Of personal significance, directly relevant to employment.
   (b) Of significance to the group, directly relevant to employment.
   (c) Of personal significance, directly relevant to personal problems.
   (d) Of significance to the group, directly relevant to personal problems.
   (e) Of personal significance, regarding physical complaints.
   (f) Of significance to the group, regarding physical complaints.
   (g) Of personal significance, irrelevant to any of the above.
   (h) Of significance to the group, irrelevant to any of the above.
3. Discussion of group process.
4. "Pandemonium" — confused or garbled recording or discussion.

As has been indicated above, judgments were made about group structure and about content of group sessions from tape recordings of the sessions. The coding system is such that judgments can be made quickly as the action proceeds. In analysis of the data, comparisons between different phases of group development and between different groups are made on the basis of percentages of responses falling in the various code categories. Estimates of the percentages of responses falling into each of the categories were found to be consistent between two independent judges, although there was variability in the total number of responses in four sample sessions judged, and in the categorization of particular individual responses. Percentage estimates for individual sessions varied by four per cent at the highest on those categories containing the greatest number of responses. In light of this consistency between judges working independently, the data on which the analyses were subsequently performed is based on judgments of a series of sessions by a single judge.

Because of formidable obstacles to tight measurement consisting of illiteracy in the clients, unfamiliarity with paper and pencil measures, shifting populations of subjects and unavailability of control subjects, another procedure was introduced during the third year of the project to assess possible changes in client attitudes and employability from the beginning of participation in group session to the end. Structured interviews were conducted with a number of clients before and after participation in group sessions. The primary purpose of the interviews was to try to establish how long the client had been unemployed, the frequency and nature of his efforts to find employment, the reasonableness of his expectations about what he was able to do, whether or not pressures to find employment were more internal or external, what resources he used to find

employment and so forth. In addition, clients were asked during the interview at the end of group counseling to evaluate the counseling sessions.

One final source of information about the groups was in counselors' evaluations of individuals in the groups and in their evaluations of the group sessions.

From the beginning of the study, it was recognized that there were formidable methodological problems which would preclude the comparison of experimental and control groups. In fact, an effort was made during the first two years to form experimental and control groups from the same population, to administer the tests which were devised and adapted to assess attitudes relevant to employment of the handicapped to all subjects before and after group counseling, and to try to observe changes on these measures. There were several major problems which finally precluded following this procedure. First, the pool of subjects available was smaller than anticipated, so that the number of "control" subjects available initially was small. Second, the number of test protocols which had to be considered invalid was very high, owing to illiteracy and unfamiliarity with test-taking among the subjects. Third, the attrition rate in groups was very high during the first two years, and the supply of "control" subjects had to be raided to keep the number of clients in counseling groups up to a minimum workable number. Finally, and related to the third point, clients were in groups for widely variable lengths of time, and had very widely variable attendance records, which would have made grouping them meaningless.

Because of the impossibility of making meaningful comparisons of experimental and control subjects, a new procedure was instituted during the third year. All clients were interviewed individually prior to the initiation of counseling sessions, and those clients who continued to attend through the full course of sessions (although still with variable attendance records) were reinterviewed following the termination of group counseling.

The interviews were of twenty to thirty minutes duration, and were tape recorded. All interviews were conducted by a psychologist who was not involved in counseling. An effort was made to acquire certain information about the client's current employment status, employment history, history of the client's disability, etc. The following questions were used as a standard guide during each of the interviews:

1. How far did you go in school?
2. What is your current employment situation?
3. What disability brought you to the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation?
4. Have you been trying to find work since the last time you had a job?
5. How have you gone about trying?
6. What do you think is the major thing standing in the way of your getting work?

Those clients who stayed with the program to the end were reinterviewed after termination of group sessions. During these sessions, the following questions served as guidelines:

1. What is your current employment situation?
2. Have you been trying to find work since the last time I saw you?
3. How have you been trying to go about finding work?

4. What would you say is the major thing standing in the way of your finding employment?

Questions during both the initial and final interview were modified to suit the situation of the particular clients being interviewed. This was particularly necessary to do during the final interviews, when many clients were employed or in training. In that case, they were questioned about how employment had been acquired, or how they had been enrolled in a particular training program.

Additional questioning was done during the final interview to try to assess the client's attitudes towards the group experience and to obtain an evaluation of the group from him.

CHAPTER III
ANALYSIS OF DATA

First Year

A total of ten groups participated in this study, three during the first year, four during the second, and three during the third. The description of the groups below is based on the data from coding tape recorded sessions. Description of the groups is by year.

1962-1963

There were three groups active during the first year of the study. The number of recorded sessions was 22 for two of the groups, and 23 for the third. For purposes of analysis, each of the three series of sessions was divided into thirds in order to compare patterns of group interaction during three arbitrarily designated phases of the group life; i.e., during the beginning, middle and end of the series of sessions. Four sessions were selected from each phase for analysis. Because it seemed likely that patterns of interaction would be uncharacteristic for the group itself when there were unusually few members present, those sessions were not included in the analysis where there were four or fewer members present, unless exclusion of all such sessions would leave fewer than four sessions in that phase. Elimination of the sessions from analysis to reduce the total number in a phase to four was otherwise on an arbitrary basis. It was anticipated that four sessions from a given phase would provide stable estimates of the patterns of interaction during the phase.

Division of the life of each of the groups into three stages is clearly an artificial procedure; careful analysis of the entire series of sessions for a given group would likely suggest more natural phases of development, given a fixed basis on which to judge the patterns of interaction in the group. The chosen procedure was settled upon, however, on the basis that some quantification of patterns was necessary which would permit observation of changes within a particular group, and which would be applicable to groups of different composition likely to develop in different ways.

Examination of the salient characteristics of the data on both structure and content is revealing of both the course and the characteristics of the group development, and of the differences between the groups. The development of the groups, as documented in the data, will be described individually. Several categories and sub-categories of responses are heavily represented as percentages of the total interaction, and others appear as considerably frequent categories rarely or not at all. There are apparent instances of major changes in frequencies both in heavily and lightly loaded categories, and description of the group development is based both on loading of the category and on changes within the category. The descriptions of the groups below are based on interpretation of salient differentiating characteristics of each of the groups.

Group A

The leadership role in Group A is defined primarily by the leaders' activity of responding to clients with information; that is, with statements

of fact, opinions, advice, and interpretations, and secondarily by their responding to clients' statements with questions. There was a slight decrease from the first to the last two phases in leaders' frequency of participation. The clients' roles in the groups involved responding to each other and leaders with matters of information, and to each other with increasing numbers of clarifications of or elaborations on statements or questions. As the group progressed in its development, clients responded more frequently to each other, and less frequently to leaders. There was increasing discussion among clients as the group progressed, with decreasing frequency of exchanges between leaders and clients, and an increase in the frequency with which clients introduced topics. There was a very heavy emphasis in this group on discussion of information directly relevant to employment, and of essentially personal interest; there was a secondary focus on discussion relevant to employment, but of interest to the group as a whole. As the group developed, there was an increase in the amount of time spent on discussion of matters of personal interest about employment, and decreasing discussion about employment of interest to the group as a whole.

Group B

The leaders role during the series of sessions involved primarily responding to client statements with information, advice, opinions and interpretations, and in this way they acted like leaders in Group A. There were shifts in their behavior apparent in the three phases. The second was different from the first or third in that leaders were less active altogether (and there was a corresponding increase in clients' reacting to each other rather than interacting with leaders). During the third phase, leaders were again more active, clients less responsive to each other, and leaders remarkably more responsive to each other. Content of the group discussions heavily emphasized subjects directly relevant to employment and of general interest, and there was a secondary emphasis on discussion of matters relevant to employment but of essentially personal interest to a group member. It will be noted that this is the opposite of the emphasis in Group A. During the first phase, there was considerable discussion of personal problems of interest chiefly to a single member of the group, and greater emphasis on discussion of physical problems of personal interest than later on.

Group C

The leadership role in Group C differed from that in Groups A and B in that leaders responded to clients chiefly with questions, and only secondarily with statements of information. They were consistently active through the first and second phases of the group development, but decreased activity during the final phase. There was a corresponding increase in the final phase in clients' responding to each other. With regard to content, there was heaviest emphasis on discussion of matters directly relevant to employment and of general interest, and secondary emphasis on discussion of employment matters of essentially personal interest. There was significant time spent on discussion of both personal problems and physical problems of interest to the group as a whole.

While it was the intention of the investigators and counselors that group sessions be used for group counseling, it was unclear to begin with how

clients would in fact use the sessions. It is clear from the data that the very heaviest emphasis was on discussion of matters relevant to employment, whether these matters were of interest primarily to an individual or to the group. While there was some discussion of matters relating to physical complaints, there was surprisingly little percentage of the total time spent on such discussion. Neither were personal problems unrelated to employment or physical complaints very much discussed in the groups, in contrast to what would have been expected in therapy groups. While leadership activity involved primarily response to clients with information, advice and interpretation in two of the groups, it involved primarily asking questions in the third group. One index of the degree of involvement of clients in group discussions in the number of their responses which are to each other, in contrast to the number of interactions with leaders. In two of the groups, the greatest degree of client interaction occurred during the final phase, while in the third group, the greatest number of client interactions was during the second phase, with a decline in the third.

Second Year

Four groups were conducted during the 1963-64 season, two of which were atypical of the groups generally included in the project. One of the groups was conducted in Western Maryland, and in an economically depressed area, and the consulting psychologist who was co-counselor was not the one who had worked with the other nine groups. The second unusual group was one which met for only ten sessions, in contrast to the other groups which met for twenty and more sessions.

Group A

It would be misleading to describe Group A as a coherent organism from the beginning of its life to the end, unless the term "group" is to be used in a loose sense. In the course of 18 recorded sessions, the group membership underwent virtually a complete change. There was not only shifting membership, with many drop outs and additions, but also there was apparently a failure of group members to develop a sense of identification with the group. Attendance was generally small; a number of members present ranged from three to eight. At half the meetings there were four members present, and at only three meetings were there more than six members present. This instability in group membership, and the small size of modal attendance, engendered a situation in which leaders were extraordinarily active, and which there developed little constructive interaction among group members. The procedure in analysis of group development, established in description of the 1962-63 groups, has been to divide sessions into thirds, comparing patterns of interaction and content of discussions among the three groups of sessions. In the present situation it would be artificial to do this, since group membership was so inconstant.

There are several salient characteristics of interaction and content of discussion reflected in coding. With regard to initiative in group discussions, there was a very strong predominance of the Structure category "leader introduces topic" over the category "client introduces topic"; further, the "leader introduces topic" category was very frequently coded throughout the entire life of the group. With regard to duration of discussions, the length of time spent on discussion of various contents was small. In giving direction

to group discussions, initiative remained with leaders to the very end. A central characteristic of interaction was that it occurred frequently between a leader and a client, and between a leader and a succession of clients; to the extent that clients responded to each other, it was noted to be with advice giving information. The fact that initiative did remain with leaders, and that interaction was so much between leaders and individuals in the groups can be related to the facts about group memberhip outlined above: that group membership was unstable, and that modal attendance was small. It is not uncommon for these patterns of interaction to occur early in group life; in the case of this particular group, the group was in a sense constantly in an early stage of development, because of its many changes in membership. It is noted from examination of data on Content that there was much discussion of topics relevant to employment and physical problems, but both were discussed as topics of a personal significance rather than as topics of significance to the entire group. Other topics of personal significance were rarely discussed, which again can be related to the fact that the group failed to develop into what might be felt by a client to be a potentially supportive resource.

Group B

Twenty-seven sessions of Group B were recorded, and the group showed clear evolutionary progress in development, both in structure and content of interactions. During the beginning phase, initiative rested with the leaders to direct the content of group discussion; interaction was characteristically between leaders and clients. Interaction among clients was generally on the order of advice giving information. Discussion was of problems relevant to employment, but of more personal than group significance. The number of topics discussed in sessions was large, and the duration of discussions was short. During the second phase of group development, initiative passed from leaders to clients; the pattern of interactions changed from one of leader-client interaction to one of client-client interaction; content of discussions changed from the first to the second phase, with less discussion of problems directly relevant to employment and more discussion of personal problems; the number of subjects discussed in a session decreased, with more time spent on the few topics discussed. During the final phase, initiative remained with the clients, interaction continued to be characteristically among clients, content shifted back to discussion of employment problems, but was now in contrast with the first phase, more often about employment problems of significance to the group rather than to particular individuals. The number of topics discussed in the final phase remained small. There was, in the final phase, much discussion about the group itself, reflecting identification with and investment in the group. It was noted that communications among clients were less often of the advice giving information variety, and more often on the order of affirming the ideas of other clients, by agreement or generalization on or specification from other clients' statements.

A greal deal is conveyed about how individual clients related to the group during its final phase by exposition of topics discussed in the final session. The meeting began with discussion by group members of the possibility of continuing to see each other despite this being the final group meeting; it was suggested that telephone numbers of group members be exchanged. This was followed by discussion of purposes and values of the group, and by statements of various members about the impact the group had had on them.

Following this, there was discussion of the purposes of vocational rehabilitation, of employment problems of significance to the group, discussion of how this group is different from a family and what it can do for a person, and following this, the relevation by one member of the group, for the first time, that he is an epileptic. There was a clear and strong sense of identification by members with a group goal of constructive discussion of problems relevant to employment.

Group C

A total of twenty sessions was recorded for Group C. The group was an extraordinary one in that its members all lived in an area which has an unusually high rate of unemployment, and in which the possibility of being gainfully employed was thus less than in the metropolitan Baltimore area. External factors then, were distinctly unfavorable to employment.

The course of group development was like that of other groups in the structure of interaction. In the beginning phase, initiative or introduction of topics rested with group leaders, and the characteristic response pattern was leader-client-leader. Clients responded more to leaders than to other clients, and the exchanges between speakers were primarily of information relating to employment or what might be described as para-employment problems, i.e. of problems with welfare, disability pensions, and so forth. Topics discussed were usually of significant to individual clients rather than to the group in general. While there was some effort on the part of leaders to encourage clients to respond to each other, characteristic response patterns in communication during the first phase remained leader to client to leader. During the second and third phases, the response pattern was changed to one which client-client responses predominated. There was concentration in content on employment and medical problems primarily. It was noted that the employment problems discussed were mostly "para-employment" problems. Personal problems of significance to an individual client or to the group as a whole were remarkably little discussed during any phase.

What distinguished this group from others was not the structure of interaction, as it evolved, nor so much the content (although as has been noted, there was little discussion of problems of a personal nature.) Rather, it was remarkable for its discussion of "para-employment" problems and medical and para-medical problems. During the second and third phases of group development, the group members expressed a sense of identification with the group, and the group seemed to be united in its efforts. The efforts were not so much toward finding employment as toward finding and attacking a common enemy outside the group -- one or another agency felt to have treated someone unfairly, an unthinking or unsupportive physician, the employed public at large, etc. While there was often tension among group members, they tended to support each other -- to affirm each other's ideas -- in attacking those representatives of outside reality or circumstance which had to do with their chronic unemployment.

Group D

Group D was an extraordinary group, in that it had been decided from the beginning to continue it within a more time limited period than other groups. A total of Ten sessions was recorded. As with Group A, which had constantly shifting membership, it would be artificial to divide sessions into thirds for purpose of analysis. As with the other groups, sessions were

coded for structure and content of interactions. Group leaders structured the group with essentially the same instructions as had been conveyed to other groups; i.e., it was made explicit that group members had in common their unemployment and the fact that they all had physical disabilities. They were told that these group meetings have been helpful to participants in clarifying problems associating with continuing unemployment, and in exchanging job information. Despite the similarity in structuring the group was distinguished from other groups in that no real evolution in interaction occurred with continued meetings.

Response patterns were very heavily weighted by leader-client responses. The characteristic pattern through the entire course of the series was for leaders to initiate topics, often of relevance to a specific client, to be followed by responses from the client. Although the primary subject discussed was employment problems, it was rarely of more than individual interest. The leader-client-leader pattern was striking; during one session midway through the series, for instance, virtually an entire hour was spent in this pattern of interaction, with only very rare responses of one client to another; such client-client responses as there were were used by the responding client to initiate topics of interest to himself. In other words, topics were rarely of common interest, and there was no real exchange on any topic, except between leaders and individual clients.

This interaction pattern had not been an uncommon one early in group meetings with other groups; it might be speculated that, had this group had a longer life, other patterns of interaction would have developed.

Third Year

Group A

There was a total of fifteen sessions recorded of Group A, and all fifteen sessions, divided into groups of five, were used in analysis of structure and content of interactions. The degree to which initiative and control of interaction remained in the hands of the leaders was extraordinary in this group. This is true not only in comparison with the other two groups of 1964 and 1965, but also in comparison with the groups from prior years. The interaction during the entire three phases of the group life was almost entirely between leaders and individual clients. This was strikingly clear during the first phase, when there was virtually no interaction at all between clients. During the very first session, there was not one single exchange between a client and a client, not even an introjection or question or any acknowledgement that the other client had spoken. No client ever introduced a topic during the first phase of the group life, and introduction of a topic by a client was extremely rare during either the second or last phase of group life also. There was an unusually long (ten minute) structuring period at the beginning of the first session, during which both leaders emphasized the purpose of the group to focus on employment problems. Following this, leaders asked for certain information from first one client then another, going around the table. Almost the whole first session was given to this process, clients speaking only at the direction and invitation of leaders, and then addressing only the leaders and not any other client. There was no indication the clients wanted to speak spontaneously, but they seemed to do so rather reluctantly at the urging of the leaders. The session consisted essentially of the leaders interviewing first one client then another in the presence of the group.

There was a very heavy loading of two categories of response in the content of discussions: "Request for, presentation of or discussion of information of personal significance, directly relevant to employment;" and "Request for, presentation of or discussion of information of personal significance, regarding physical complaints." A very frequent pattern of interaction was in the structure of the interactions was as follows: Leader introduces topic, followed by leader responds to leader with question, followed by client responds to leader with information, followed by leader introduces topic. Topics were only briefly discussed, and new topics consequently frequently introduced by the leaders in order to keep the action going. During the first session, the leaders made a few efforts to bring the discussion to a general level (for example, "What sorts of things are we able to do with our disabilities?"), but somehow this always eventuated in another interaction between an individual client and an individual leader, and never in interaction among group members. Efforts by leaders to generalize the level of the discussion always failed, with clients immediately responding to these efforts with specification of some personal employment or physical problem.

It was an extraordinary phenomenon for no client ever to respond to another client in the course of a group session. As described above, this phenomenon did occur during the first session, and in fact interactions between clients were extremely rare during the first phase. While the number of interactions between clients increased during the second and third phases, they were extremely brief interactions, and they were far outnumbered by leader-individual client interactions. The pattern of a leader interviewing a client in the presence of the group continued during the second phase. While during the initial phase, and particularly in the earliest sessions of that phase, there had been a great deal of discussion of physical complaints of personal significance, as well as of employment problems of personal significance, discussion of physical complaints was sharply reduced during the second phase and the focus was almost entirely on employment problems of personal significance. During the final phase, the focus remained on employment problems, but now of significance to the group. While there were some occasional discussions of physical complaints, by far the heaviest emphasis was on discussion of employment problems. There was more interaction between group members, but group leaders remained remarkably active, and the characteristic interaction patterns were between leaders and individual clients.

Throughout the entire life of the group, initiative was constantly in the hands of the group leaders. Having firmly grasped hold of it in the initial session, leaders never let go, and very little ever came from the group to keep interaction going. Very rarely did clients ever introduce topics, did clients ever respond to clients, or did a client ever generalize to direct a discussion toward something of more general interest than his own. This is a particularly remarkable phenomenon, since the number of clients attending the sessions was usually very small. During the first three sessions, there were seven, eight, and six clients present; following this, there were usually three or four clients present, on two occasions five clients present and on one occasion six. In nine out of the total of fifteen recorded sessions, three or four clients were present. Thus interactions between clients should have been easy to the extent that it is easier to interact in small groups. But in spite of this, as has been pointed out above, the interaction pattern was very consistently between individual clients and leaders.

The particular style of interaction set by the leaders early in the game, i.e., in which the leader addresses an individual client who in turn responds to him, is one which might be better suited to individual than to group sessions. While it was a style which made it possible to focus sharply on discussion of employment problems, without getting into discussion of personal problems and getting distracted by discussion of physical complaints, it is not a pattern which really facilitated group interaction. It is certainly noteworthy that the number of clients attending the sessions reduced sharply after the first three sessions, when there were only rarely more than four clients present. One can very reasonably speculate that this was a result of the interaction pattern set by the leaders, rather than the reverse was true. It appears that the client obliged the leaders by moving closer to individual sessions with them.

Group B

In contrast to Group A, the structuring by the leaders in Group B was brief and vague, and initiative in the first five minutes of the first session was passed from leaders to clients. As in Group A, clients were invited to introduce themselves, but the initial statements made by clients were long and detailed and clients spontaneously offered a greal deal of information about themselves, relevant to their personal physical problems and personal employment problems. Leaders were remarkably inactive during the session; there was a very heavy predominance of client-client interaction over interactions between clients and leaders. There were two roles which the leaders played, not only during the first session, but during the first phase; to introduce topics and to respond to clients with generalizations. But it should be emphasized that leader comments were brief and infrequent. Clients responded to each other frequently, with agreement, generalization, occasional specification to their own cases, clarification of questions or statements and frequently with presentation of information. The introduction of topics was more frequently made by clients than by leaders. It is remarkable that all during the first phase, and even during the first session, clients asked each other for information, rather than asking leaders for information as was typical in most groups. Because discussion time of each particular topic was long, there were remarkably few topics discussed in each session during the initial phase, and it is noteworthy that these were not only of personal significance regarding physical complaints and relevant to employment, but also of group significance relevant to employment.

There was a very definite shift in the style of interaction between the first and second two phases and also in the content of discussions between the first and second two phases Since sessions were arbitrarily grouped into thirds for purposes of analysis, there is a certain observation about the first phase which is lost in the analysis of the data; that is, that the style of interaction and qualities of content were so pronounced during the first few sessions as to obscure changes which occur during the last few sessions of the first phase, since the data were all lumped. There was a transition discernible from client-client interactions to more frequent client-leader interactions, and a reduction in the length of time spent on individual topics, with more topics introduced by leaders and more discussion of physical and employment problems of a personal nature. During the second two phases, the pattern of interaction is dramatically different from the pattern during the

first phase. While most topics during the first phase had been introduced by clients, most topics during the second two phases were introduced by group leaders. There was a sharper focus on physical problems of a personal nature and employment problems of a personal nature. During the first phase, there had been a certain amount of "groupy" discussion of matters of significance to the group, but irrelevant to employment, personal problems, or physical complaints. This dropped out altogether during the second two phases. But while the focus was then completely on employment problems and physical problems (and more the former than the latter), the pattern was really one of individual counseling taking place in a group setting rather than group interaction. The reason for this transition having occurred from the first to the second two phases is not altogether clear from listening to the tapes. One problem may have been that there was a very high rate of attrition in the group, due to sickness, and that there was then frequent introduction of new members in order to keep the group going. There was not time to absorb new members into the group, and the pattern changed from one of client-client interactions to one of client-leader interactions. Clients seemed to become less invested in the group, and more in the leaders.

While the second and third phases have been considered together above, because they were similar in both structure and content of discussions, there was one noteworthy additional thing about the third phase; i.e., that there was more discussion of problems of personal significance to individual clients. During discussions of these problems, there was increased client-client interaction, and apparently increased awareness of the group as a group.

Group C

Group C started as most groups did, with more interaction between leaders and clients than between clients and other clients during the initial phase, with leaders introducing topics much more commonly than clients, with clients specifying from prior statements to their own cases, and with heavy representation in content of discussion of personal physical disabilities and of personal employment problems. During the second phase, leadership remained active, but topics were more frequently introduced by the group than by leaders, and there was more interaction between clients and other clients. There was a sharp drop in the amount of discussion of information of personal significance, regarding physical complaints, and there was a sharp increase in discussion of information both of personal significance, directly relevant to employment, and of group significance, directly relevant to employment. In the latter category, there was an unusually large amount of discussion of particular jobs, the pre-requisite training required and the personal and physical requirements to perform in the job. These were categorized as topics of concern to the group, since they were handled in that particular way by the group. During the final phase, leadership remained active, introducing topics with increasing frequency over the prior phase, and there was increased interaction over the second phase in leader-client interactions. Clients did, however, continue to interact with each other. There was a change in the amount of time spent on employment problems of personal significance and employment problems of general significance to the group; there was an increase in the amount of time spent on the former and decrease in the amount of time spent on the latter. It is noteworthy that, while a great deal of time was spent

on discussion of employment problems of significance to a particular individual, there was active participation by group members in discussion of these problems. There was not a one-to-one dialogue between a leader and a client, but rather an active participation of several group members in discussion of the particular employment problems of an individual member. During the last phase, there was very little discussion of physical problems in relation to the amount of time spent on discussion of employment problems.

General Observations

From examination of the formal variables, it is possible to make some summary observations about what happened in the groups, in terms of content of group discussion and patterns of interaction, and to speculate on relationships between leadership roles and what happened in the groups. It must be kept in mind that these observations are really summaries of summaries; that is, that they are generalizations inferred from the summarizations of complex data made in the coding.

Concerning content of discussion, employment was more frequently discussed than any other subject in all groups regardless of their life spans, patterns of interaction, constancy of membership or any other characteristic. This is not surprising considering the facts that the common problem of group members was their unemployment, that they were brought together by a vocational rehabilitation agency, and that group leaders clearly expressed the expectation that employment problems would be discussed. More discussion of physical and personal problems might have been expected to occur than did, considering the nature of the population of groups. But if there was nothing to distinguish one group from another in the general subject matter of group discussions, there were differences in the extent to which employment problems discussed were of general interest or of interest essentially to one or another group member. Where it occurred that group members continued to discuss employment problems in essentially personal terms (as they might in individual sessions with a vocational rehabilitation counselor), this pattern was encouraged by group leaders. There were certain patterns of leader behavior which may have determined this outcome, at least in part. It appears to have occurred where leaders were active in introducing topics, where they responded to individual clients with information — advice, opinions, interpretations — and addressed themselves to successions of clients rather than to the group as a whole, with questions or generalizations. Where leaders did respond with questions or generalizations, expanding a topic to one of general interest to group members, members responded by discussing things in the same terms.

Considering the way in which group members were selected, it is perhaps not surprising that efforts of group members seemed directed at establishing individual relationships with the leaders, rather than at establishing a relationship between themselves and the group. In a sense, it was the purpose of individual clients to destroy the group; i.e., to reduce the complexity of the field to a relationship between themselves and one or both leaders such as they might have had in individual vocational rehabilitation counseling. Where leaders responded to this pressure of clients and moved in the direction clients wanted, groups did not get off the ground. Group meetings consisted of individual counseling in groups when leaders continued to introduce topics with frequency, rather than relinquishing some degree of initiative to the group; when they encouraged individual leader-client relationships by

encouragement of the leader-client pattern of interaction with advice - and information - giving; and when they failed to generalize discussion by asking questions or expanding topics to general interest. Clients apparently learn from leaders' behavior during the first several sessions what is expected of them, and follow the patterns set by leaders throughout the life of the group. Where leaders fail to generalize, clients continue to deal with problems at a personal level, even when responding to each other. Similarly, where leaders in the beginning respond to and address individual clients and successions of clients, clients themselves, even when taking initiative, address individual clients rather than the group.

The leader's task in the beginning is a difficult one, because with these particular clients, energy level is low.

Client Reaction

Clients participating in the study during the third year were interviewed prior to the beginning of group sessions in an effort to establish how long they had been unemployed, how often and in what way they made efforts to find employment, whether they tended to initiate efforts at finding employment on their own or under external pressure, and in general to establish a "base line" for evaluation of possible changes following participation in group counseling. Those clients who did not drop out of the groups in the course of the year were reinterviewed following the termination of group meetings. They were interviewed again about their current employment situations, and were questioned at length about the groups in an effort to establish whether or not they had felt the experience to be worthwhile, in what particular ways they might have found it helpful, in what ways they would have liked for it to be different, whether or not it made any difference in their attitudes toward their own employment, whether there was any change in what they considered to be the chief obstacle to employment for them individually and so forth.

When the groups first meet, we should expect certain patterns of behavior that is due to the feeling of anxiety within the group. In this project, this anxiety would manifest itself by the occurrence of long silences. When this occurs during the first few sessions, one of the leaders should intervene by injecting some appropriate remark; for such an absence of verbal communication in early groups is destructive to the morale of the group.

Generally, the new groups in this situation did not question the leader on anything. They did not inquire about the testing program that took place prior to the meeting, or the particular roles of the group leader; in fact, not one of the members questioned the presence of the tape recorder and microphone which were clearly in sight of all of those in the room. However, as the members became more comfortable with their surroundings and the activity, these questions and many more were put to the leader, such as "What are you going to do with those tapes?" and "How did I do on that tape?" Although the questions were answered as succintly as possible, all of the answers given the members were honest answers. This type of behavior is an indication of group maturity; i.e., they feel comfortable with each other. When this happens in the group,the leaders can become more forceful.

Another indication of group maturity is seen when group members can disagree with each other. It is not helpful for the tension level to get too high, for this, too, would destroy interaction. This did not come up as a problem in any of the groups during the three-year period.

When the members start using the collective pronouns "we" and "us", when referring to themselves, we can assume, in most cases, that they are developing the feeling of cohesion. As the group becomes more mature, the leaders can become more active and do and say things that will promote the accomplishment of the goal. In this situation, one way of evaluating the locomotion of the group is by evaluating their content. When the topics discussed concern jobs and job-seeking activities, this is positive communication. When this content is absent, we can assume that for some reason or another they are not motivated toward taking action in the direction of the goal at this time.

There were certainly differences discernible in the way in which members of different groups talked about the experience during the post-counseling interviews. The members of Group C had definite ideas about the value of the group experience, and were able to state what meaning it had to them in particular. Quoted below are some excerpts from interviews with some of the clients in Group C. The responses quoted below are to an open-ended invitation to talk about what the group was like, whether or not the client had found it helpful in any way, in what particular ways the client did find it helpful, and in what ways he would have preferred it to be different.

Mr. J: "I was out of the group quite a bit (because of illness). But I know it's good for the morale. Otherwise, you get turned down here, you get turned there, the tendency is to become, well, depressed. One man in the group made a remark when I was just on the verge of going into depression. His remark was to the effect that well thank goodness you're alive. It was positive. It had a lot of meaning at that time, because I had just had to drop out of school. I was feeling sorry for myself. That seemed like a punch-line that just hit me right between the eyes. From the point of view of therapy, it has value. These guys will say something to help you, and you will say something to help them. (What kinds of things did you talk about?) Possible employment, possible training. (What would be the best size for a group like this?) Well, since you have an hour no more than you had before — ten or twelve. (How many people in the group would be too few?) That's hard to say. It's one of these things that you have to have enough to have interchange. The size you had last time is ideal. (What kinds of people might stand to gain most from this sort of experience?) Anybody can who is willing. Who is willing to accept the fact that he has a limitation, but is not totally disabled. There was only one person in the group who was negative. (What should the main role of the leaders be?) The main thing, they should provoke discussion. Where you provoke the person to say something. But I found that we became acquainted with each other. Brotherhood."

Mr. N: "I think it a very interesting thing to have, you know, enlighten you to a different program. Give you the courage you know. And also, also give you encouragement, you know. You get to doubting yourself, but by listening to different ones talking, different ones ideas .... in other words just for an individual person, it gives them light, you know. Enlighten you. We go into this program, and talk this one and that one handicapped and got a job, then you learn about all these new programs. (Was it

in any way helpful to you personally?) Yeah, I think it is. Because if you have any doubts about talking, it makes you feel as through you are eligible to execute a job, to get a job you are confident in. That helps a lot you know."

Mr. S: "They talk things out amongst themselves, and their situations and what was the best, how to go about getting a job, and what was the best way to get a job. I think it was entirely worthwhile. Most people stay home, they don't know how they're going to get a job. I know I was one of them. They don't know where their next job's going to come from. When they talk amongst themselves, they feel more or less at ease. (Can you tell me how you personally participate in the group?) Oh, we all talked about handicaps, more or less, and how to go about getting around it. (What size group would you say is best?) Like this — eleven or twelve. If you get too many of them, you can't follow each one, keep your eye on each one individually. (What kinds of people would you say can get the most out of this kind of group?) People with more or less the same handicap I got."

Mr. R: "In my opinion the group is good. I mean I love it. We all have different handicaps, and everybody expressed their thoughts. Didn't hold back anything. One thing about it, they take pity on theirselves, and we were trying to figure out with a handicap like we were, we have to depend on outself and nobody else. Didn't want nobody to feel sorry for us. And so we discuss how and where we can find a job that is suitable for us. (What did you think was the most helpful thing about the group?) Mr. A and Mr. S (the counselor and psychologist) that took interest in us. They didn't down us or nothing. (How large a group would you say is the best size?) The same amount (as this year). No sense in getting nobody in that don't want to participate. (How many people would be too many?) Fifteen or twenty people, everybody can't discuss nothing. If I hadn't come to the council meeting I wouldn't be in this training."

Mr. M: "Point one I would say it have therapeutic value, as far as getting an exchange of ideas. I think A and S (the counselor and psychologist) try without overdoing to get an exchange of ideas. I think it helps you put your problems in focus. I don't think they were quite as searching as they might have, there was a tendency to turn the meeting over to the participants. I know the resentment people have that have handicaps, people constantly pounding on them. I think they brought a lot out. I think there might have been more effort on their part to come up with concrete suggestions, which they shied away from. (What kinds of things did the group talk about?) Well, naturally job opportunities was the big thing. And a definite effort was made to try to get everybody to accept the fact that they had limitations. And that the oyster that was there before the disability no longer existed. There were several people in the group, I would have thrown up my hands. There are several of them, that I don't think they were capable of being helped, because I don't think that they had it in themselves. (Client continues to discuss how they were brought out in the group.) I got a great deal of benefit. I contributed a little sometimes I hope, and I know the boys contributed a little something to me. I've taken the problem in my own hands. I don't know, if I hadn't stayed in the group, whether or not it would have been that way. I think that sitting smugly in judgment of your fellow man makes you come up short and say, "Wait a minute, who are you." This is the value of the group association. We got to know one another, we got

to frankly kibitz one another and frankly to criticize one another. "What are you waiting for, fellow". At the beginning, everybody was like a stick. But after about four meetings, the hair started to come down. I think it's well worth while. (What would you say should be different about the groups?) Well, I think a little more positive direction, leadership. I don't like to talk this way because it sounds snobbish. But where you are dealing with limited ability, it's almost like children. (This is in reference to the fact that there were group members of obviously lower intelligence and education than this particular client.) Here you had to sit down with them. I thought if anything, there was room for improvement in that line. You got to jump on them, and say, "Look fellow, what are you doing. You have to go out and find a job." This was ironically my worst failure. I was sitting at home. Being exposed to many weaknesses at many levels, I think you see your own weaknesses too. I gained a great deal from it. I'd like to come back."

However articulate or inarticulate the individual clients were, they were able to offer definite ideas about how the groups ought to be run, what was good and what was bad about them, and what they individually got out of the group. There were various indications that the clients felt themselves to be members of a group, and that they derived some benefit from the group experience in contrast to what they might have got from individual counseling. Several of the clients in this group, in responding to open questions about whether or not group participation might be beneficial, volunteered explicit information about the current employment status of each of the other members of the group, showing awareness of and concern for them, as well as for the group leaders. There was remarkably little said by the clients about their handicaps, but a great deal said about employment situations.

In contrast, quoted below are excerpts from responses to the same questions by members of other groups, in which there was irregular attendance by members, high turnover rate in membership, and in which individual counseling was carried on in a group setting.

It should be kept in mind in reading the following excerpts that the focus of the questions was on the group, but that clients quickly shifted to discussion of their individual cases.

Mr. P: "Personally I thought it was helpful. A lot of people didn't know what they want, and when they talk about it like me, he asked me about watch repairing. I said O.K. (Did you talk it over in the group?) Yeah. (Client gets off into a discussion of his experiences in watch repairing training program.) (What would you say was good about the sessions, and what you rather have had different?) I don't know how different. But one thing about finding the possibility of a job in what you might like. (Do you remember any sessions that you thought were particularly good?) I can't pick out any one in particular. I would say they were all about the same. (If you had the chance to do it again, would you go back into the group?) Let's put it this way, if I thought it would help anybody or any matter, yeah. (What sort of person would it help?) Somebody who just don't know what they want, or what they're able to do. They might get some encouragement, and say I'd like to try this."

Mr. C: "We ain't going to have no more meetins any more. I think

it was very nice, educational and everything. You learn how to go about gettin different things. I been up to unemployment, to see Mrs. M. this morning. She doesn't have anything right now. She'll let me know. (Do any of the sessions stand out in your mind as particularly good ones?) All of them was good as far as I'm concerned. The main one was about the third one, not being shy about goin for a job, speakin' up. I enjoyed it. (Did you find it worthwhile talking with other clients?) Oh yeah. (Can you pin down what it was you got from the group?) Well most thing was the shyness, which you know you have. That's the main thing about it, gettin that out of you, you know. Workin with people after you get on the job, just don't pay them no mind. (If there were anything you could change about the group, what would it be?) Well, I don't think nothin I would want to change. It seems nice, as far as I was concerned. (What would you say is the best number of people to have in a group like that?) About 15. If you have more, you don't get around. (What about having fewer clients?) That would be nice too, I would say eight or nine. (Client then begins to talk about his own employment situation.) I went to one guy just last week. I was takin' therapy. He would have hired me, but I couldn't get off therapy. That was one Mrs. M got. I think everything will be all right."

Mrs. B: "I like it and everything, but I don't think I am able to keep the job I got because I had one of them seizures last Sunday. I went over to take one of them Nurses' Aide courses, but as soon as I got over there I had one of them seizures, and I haven't been right since. (Client continues to talk about her history of seizures. Interviewer brings her back to discussion of the group.) I went to most all of them (meetings) until they become you know tiresome, weary, I mean everytime you come you learn mostly the same thing. It is all right is you haven't been to any before. After you keep coming, it's the same thing every week. Because there's mostly different people. (Suppose the same people were to come every week, would it be better then?) No, I don't think so. Because they have different suggestions. (Client then begins to talk about how she needed glasses and got them. Interviewer asks her what things were most helpful to talk about in the group.) Well, the most helpful thing was about people finding work with disabilities. That were the most helpful than anything. Just like the Nurses' Aid, after we talked about it a while I became interested in it. (This is in reference not to a discussion in the group, but between the client and a counselor in an individual session.) After they had that course out at (a local hospital) I became interested in it. That's the thing that helped me. (How many people would you say there ought to be in a group like this?) Well, about 15. With just a few people, everybody is just sittin around lookin at each other, don't have anything to say. They said what they have to say."

In contrast to the first lot of clients, quoted above, it was very difficult with this particular series of clients to keep them focused on discussion of the group. This was certainly true also in their participation in group sessions, in which there was a strong tendency to talk about matters of purely individual interest. Again in contrast to the first group of subjects quoted, there was no sense of really active participation in a group, and very little sense of relationship to other members of the group.

CHAPTER IV
CONCLUSIONS

Follow-Up Data Regarding Employment Status

The major purpose of group counseling was to remobilize long-active clients, who were not employed following individual counseling; the ultimate and only test of the effectiveness of using group counseling is whether or not the clients are employed or in training within a short period of time following group counseling. The data on this are promising.

During the first year, thirty-eight clients were active participants in group counseling. Of these, all thirty-eight were, by the end of that year, employed. During the second year, there were thirty-six participants, of whom, however, only fifteen were employed. During the final year, there were forty-six participants. Many of these clients attended too few sessions to have been active participants in group counseling. Twenty-five clients attended five or more sessions; of these, ten were employed full time, six were in training, and nine were unemployed. Within the individual groups, there was clearly uneven distribution of unemployed to those employed or in training. In one group, there were ten active participants, of whom eight were employed or in training and only two were unemployed. One of the unemployed had concrete plans, with the good prospect of eventual employment. In another group, there were seven active participants, of whom four were finally employed or in training and three were unemployed. In the third group, there were eight active participants, of whom four were employed or in training, and four unemployed.

In evaluating these figures, it should be kept in mind that clients participating in the study were "problem cases", whose employment histories were poor, and who prognoses for reemployment were extremely doubtful. The fact that 69 out of 99 participating clients (using attendance at five or more sessions) were employed or in training for employment at the end of the period would indicate that the group counseling process is effective in motivating the hard core disabled client to seek and obtain employment. The experiment served also, as previously indicated, to demonstrate the superiority of some techniques over others, in eliciting effective group responses and individual actions. With the elimination of the less effective techniques on the part of group leaders, greater success may be anticipated.

Comparison of Techniques

Between the very first efforts at group counseling, in the pilot project which preceeded the first year of the research project, and the final year of the project, an evolution occurred in the approach of counselors to groups. The clients selected for participation for the pilot project were like those used in the research project; i.e., physically handicapped, physically rehabilitated but chronically unemployed clients. In the vocational rehabilitation program, the single major criterion of success is whether or not a client who is initially unemployed is, as a result of the efforts of his counselor, finally employed or enrolled in training which will lead to employment. The clients selected for group counseling were failures of the program. The clients in the pilot project were like those in the research project in this respect. While clients were essentially similar from the beginning of the pilot project to the end of the research project, counselors

changed in their handling of groups. The term "unstructured group therapy" had been used to describe the procedure used in the pilot group. The term "therapy" was dropped by the time the project began, and the term "unstructured", after the first year of the project, lost what usefulness it might have had in the beginning to describe the influence counselors exerted on groups. Beginning during the first year, more during the second, and clearly by the final year of the research project, counselors consciously and deliberately directed, focused, and sometimes forced discussion of problems directly relevant to employment.

The term "unstructured" as it was used in the beginning implied that a group of clients, given the opportunity to meet together regularly, and given introjections by counselors only to facilitate group interaction and not to direct discussion, would inevitably come to discussion of common problems about employment, would awaken in each other the motivation to seek and hold employment, and would help each other to clarify and resolve those attitudes they discerned in each other and in themselves which were detrimental to employment.

In fact there were very encouraging results during the pilot project, applying this philosophy. But from rather early on in the research project, counselors began, willy-nilly, to focus discussions sharply on employment problems of general and personal significance. By far most of the interactions between counselors and clients were not intended to facilitate group interaction, but they had the effect of focusing, generalizing, or initiating conversations about employment problems. There were individual counselors who, from the beginning, were didactic in their approaches to groups, or who very frequently initiated topics which were sometimes of interest to the group in general, but often just to an individual client; who were in effect, conducting individual counseling in groups. Other counselors, having tried in the beginning to allow action and topics to come from the group, and seeing the group founder in shifting membership, absenteeism, etc., then moved in forcefully with very tight structuring; e.g., by teaching clients to fill out application forms for jobs.

There was no systematic training of counselors before they began group counseling. There was guidance provided by a co-counselor who was constant in all groups, and who had had a great deal of experience with group dynamics and group therapy. But counselors were required to find their own way, to develop their own techniques, in working with groups of clients. While it was natural for some counselors to provide little structure or direction for the group, it was more natural for others to provide very definite structure. There was more consistent attendance by clients and fewer drop outs when definite strong leadership was provided from the beginning. When clients were on their own to initiate discussions, there was a tendency for them to seek the counselors' attention to themselves, to stay focused on physical and employment problems of interest only to themselves.

In terms of vitality, regularity of attendance, and constancy of membership, the most successful groups can be described in the following terms. Clients were from the counselor's own case load. There was pressure on individual clients within the group to participate in discussions, to respond to other clients, to consider both employment problems of general interest and of interest to themselves individually. There was pressure exerted by

leaders on clients to take definite action outside the group. Leaders were active participants in group sessions. Strong and active leadership was provided from the beginning of the sessions.

APPENDIX

ORIGINAL LETTER OF INVITATION WITH REPRODUCTION OF CARD ENCLOSURE

Date _____

_____

_____

_____

Dear _____:

We are forming a group to meet regularly once a week to discuss difficulties people with disabilities must surmount in order to secure employment. These meetings will be held for approximately one hour one evening a week.

It is hoped that you will be interested in joining this group and in participating in the discussions of problems common to all who are looking for a job. It is our belief that by the exchange of view and experiences you will be more successful in your search for employment.

Please indicate on the enclosed card whether or not you would be interested in this activity. Arrangements for transportation will be made for those who are unable to finance it otherwise. Those who are interested will be notified when the first meeting will take place.

Very truly yours,

___ Yes, I am interested in joining the group.

___ No, I am not interested in joining the group.

If you answer is "no" please give your reasons _____

_____.

Signature _____

Address _____

SECOND LETTER OF INVITATION

Date _____

_____

_____

_____

Dear _____:

On March 7, 1961 a letter was sent to invite you to be a member of a group meeting regularly to discuss difficulties people with disabilities must surmount in order to secure employment. To date, an answer has not been received from you.

Should you be interested in participation in this exchange of experiences and ideas, another card is enclosed for your completion. In order to be considered for membership, your answer must be returned by April 3. Arrangements for transportation will be made for those who are unable to finance it otherwise.

Very truly yours,

NOTICE OF FIRST MEETING

Date _____

_____

_____

_____

Dear _____:

The first session of our group meetings will be held on Wednesday, April 12, 1961 at 8 P.M. We have been able to obtain a room in which to meet in the offices of the Health and Welfare Council. This room is located on the third floor of the building at 22 Light Street. When you arrive, please take the self-service elevator to the third floor.

Enclosed you will find two bus tokens to provide your transportation for the meeting. We will be looking forward to seeing you on Wednesday.

Very truly yours,